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FARM LIFE: 1935 AND AFTER

A radio discussion among Romaine Tate, 4-H Club Member, Green County, Arkansas; William Laybourne, 4-H Club Member, Clark County, Ohio; Mrs. E. H. Johnson, Girls' State 4-H Club Leader for South Carolina; C. W. Ferguson, State 4-H Club Agent for Colorado; Wakelin McNeel, Assistant State 4-H Club Leader for Wisconsin; and Morse Salisbury, Chief of Radio Service, broadcast Wednesday, June 19, 1935, in the Land Grant College program of the National Farm and Home Hour, by a network of 51 radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company.

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SALISBURY:

In the Land Grant College program today we are going to bring you some reports and some comments from state extension service executives who are here attending the annual National 4-H Club Camp, about which you have undoubtedly heard in previous Farm and Home Hour programs of the past week; and we also are going to bring into your living rooms the voices of a representative club girl and a representative club boy at the camp. We have chosen a great, round, eye-and-mind filling matter for them to discuss-- economic and social conditions in farm communities of various sections as they exist now; also what these young folks and the leaders who are in contact with them and their fellow club members think may be the future course of economic and social conditions in farming communities of the different sections. Now these young people have not been making any special study of such an awesome subject; they have been occupied in growing up -- and a very handsome job they have done of it too -- in equipping themselves with knowledge and technical skill and general learning to play their part in the life of their times and to appreciate the music and the writing and the art that is their heritage, in common with the rest of us Americans.

I have talked with them and it seems to me that both of them have a keen observing eye for what's going on in the community round about them, and they evidently come from families where common sense is highly esteemed as equipment for judging what's going to happen in the future. I think you will enjoy meeting these young people and having their comments -- and you will also enjoy making the acquaintance of the state extension leaders from South Carolina and Colorado and Wisconsin, who are here with us. As I call the roll and present these folks I am just going to ask each of them to make a few comments about the general situation among farm families in their States. All right, here goes:

Farm and Home Hour folks, meet William Laybourne, 4-H Club member of Clark County, Ohio -- black haired, a twinkle in his eyes that are protected from the Ohio winds and sun by black brows that in later years probably will be called beetling: tall and athletic. Bill, what's the sitsheeyshun in Clark County?

LAYBOURNE:

The present situation is that I have the honor of extending Clark County greetings to this radio audience. We are doing very nicely, thanks. We escaped the worst effects of the drought that hit further West last year. We have played our part in the adjustment programs and naturally like the

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improved prices for farm products that have come along after and maybe partly because of these programs. The young fellows in my section of the county anyway have a pretty good opinion of the opportunity in farming right now and if they can get started in it I judge they would like to be farmers. I guess that about sums it up, Mr. Salisbury.

SALISBURY:

All right, Bill. We'll let it stand at that. Now Miss Romaine Tate, from Green County, Arkansas, will you come up here front and center That's fine. Farm and Home listeners, meet Romaine Tate -- a typical daughter of the Southwest; strong, standing above average height, with a pleasant smile and the easy, friendly manner that all the folks have in that part of the world. Miss Tate, I wonder if you would tell us how Green County folks look on things in general.

TATE:

I'll be glad to, Mr. Salisbury. We people in Green County -- anyway the people that I see and work with all the time -- we people in Green County are more confident about things than we have been in some recent years. So far back as I can remember very clearly -----

SALISBURY:

Maybe I had better tell you Farm and Home Hour listeners that Romaine Tate and Bill Laybourne are right at the average of 4-H Club campers -- 18 -- go ahead, Romaine.

TATE:

Well, as long as you have exposed my age I may as well say that for the past five or six years, Green County families have seemed to be unlucky. It has been drought or flood or something. When I left home about 10 days ago daddy still didn't have his corn crop up and he had replanted it three times. It is too much rain this year, of course. And some of the other years recently it's been not enough rain. And, of course, at the prices paid for crops even if we turned out big yields we weren't exactly rolling in wealth. The result is that the farm people in our county have had to try various other sources of income besides farming. But most of them have come through all right, even if cash has been pretty scarce. They are going to carry on as farmers. At least that's the way it seems to me.

SALISBURY:

Well, bless your clear-thinking head, Romaine. I would be inclined to trust your judgment.

Now, let me present to you Farm and Home listeners some of the state extension workers who are here for the club camp. First, I want you to meet again -- he was on the National 4-H broadcast just two weeks ago -- I want you to meet again Mr. Wakelin McNeel, the assistant state club leader for Wisconsin -- you can read the map of Scotland as well as Wisconsin on Mr. McNeel's Celtic face and the width and brilliance of the smile of this specialist in 4-H Club forestry work would do justice to the mythical Paul Bunyan himself. Mr. McNeel, no tall stories now, just tell us briefly how

Wisconsin farm boys and girls look on farm life in 1935.

McNEEL:

Very well, Morse. But I will issue an invitation, Farm and Home listeners, to come to Wisconsin and hear about Paul Bunyan from our woodsmen.

SALISBURY:

If they all feel like I do about it -- and are a little bit better equipped financially -- they'll all accept.

McNEEL:

The more the merrier. And when they get to the northern lakes region they will find in Wisconsin and other states up there, not complete satisfaction with things as they are -- of course not; but a strong determination to use scientific knowledge and the power that people have when they work together for a common cause in order to bring better times. I know many of the young fellows in the dairy business -- the heart of the agriculture of our state -- who have tightened their belts and taken this time of low prices for milk as an opportunity to weed out the poor producers. Today these young fellows are getting larger milk checks from smaller herds; and the same young fellows are the first to meet their obligations to the community and among the foremost in keeping up the attractive appearance of their home farms.

SALISBURY:

Mr. McNeel, from my brief residence in Wisconsin, I noticed that the people there were quite enthusiastic about providing entertainment for themselves in their own farm communities even in the days when milk prices were better. Then they could, if they wanted to, go into town for movies and that sort of thing -- buy their recreation. But, even though they were able to buy recreation eight or nine years ago, they were organizing to produce home talent plays, setting up local orchestras, and bands, and so on.

McNEEL:

Yes, and we have gone a long way since then. There is a lot more of it than when you were in Wisconsin. I don't think anyone will quarrel with me when I say Wisconsin farm boys and girls now appreciate their environment more than any other group of folks I have worked with and know better how to make their own pleasures.

SALISBURY:

I am sure they do, Mac. Now, Farm and Home listeners, let me present to you one of these wiry, mid-westerners who, along with the rough-hewn types of the Western range and mountain country, make up the prevailing type that you find in the eastern Rockies -- Mr. C. W. Ferguson, State 4-H Club agent in Colorado. . . . If we had television sending out his image to you, you would conclude even before he begins talking to us that the intense concentration of those eyes which can't be dimmed from the beholder even by the glasses, betokens an inquiring mind rather on the serious side, but relieved with a quiet good humor. Farm and home folks, C. W. Ferguson.

FERGUSON:

Thanks, Morse, and I don't want to let Mac here get away with any of the tourist trade without giving him a Colorado run for his money. Come out our way, folks -- I won't say a thing at all about the rugged grandeur of our mountain scenery, the stimulating quality of the altitudinous air of the Rockies, the delights of trout fishing in an ice-cold, rushing mountain stream.

SALISBURY:

Fergy, I don't believe we are going to have time for you to list the things you're not going to mention. Suppose you content yourself with an invitation to visit Colorado.

FERGUSON:

(Chuckles) All right, then. Come to Colorado yourselves, Farm and Home listeners, and investigate our agricultural situation; in the midst of some of the grandest scenery on the North American continent, or anywhere in the world for that matter.

But to live up to the advance notice given me by our presiding officer and to be serious about it -- our folks in the sections of Colorado where they grow the staple crops like wheat and sugar beets, have been tided over a very tough time by the AAA benefit payments. In sections where they produce special crops they had some benefit from the marketing agreements, although we haven't organized to take advantage of these grants of governmental power like the people have further west. By and large we have come through in fair shape. And of course our optimistic western temperament leads us to face the future with confidence. I would say that a number of the 4-H club boys that come and talk with me are convinced that farming offers them a good chance. But they are puzzled sometimes to figure out how they are going to get capital to start farming for themselves. The young fellows who got started in farming before the period of low prices hit have shown a lot of ingenuity getting through. I was especially impressed the other day by a story one of them told me about how he was going into the business of growing pyrethrum, a new crop which promises to make good returns for people who will study the technic of its culture and produce it while the price is up, since it is new in this country.

SALISBURY:

You mean the pyrethrum plant that produces the flowers that make an insect-killing preparation?

FERGUSON:

Yes, that is the one.

SALISBURY:

But when a good many get into growing it for the limited demand it won't be profitable any more.

FERGUSON:

That's true and at that time I suppose the fellow I talked with will be getting out of it and into something else. I just mentioned him as an example of the alertness of our young folks.

SALISBURY:

Well, I have the impression from talking to our club member representatives that they admire that particular quality of mind very highly. Maybe it's something that is stressed in 4-H club training. What do you think about it, Bill?

LAYBOURNE:

I guess you're right, Mr. Salisbury. The project work instructions and the leaders lay emphasis on figuring things out for yourself and finding the way of doing things that will keep down expenses and bring in the greatest net return. It is just a short step from that to figuring out new things in the way of crops that might earn you a return above expenses.

SALISBURY:

I thought that is what you would say, Bill. I recall you told me the other day that you were figuring on a combination of sheep and alfalfa as the major crops for the home farm -- that they worked about as good as any combination of enterprises you could see just now. By the way, Farm and Home listeners, Bill Laybourne and his father offer a good example of specializing in one line of production and really doing it well. Recently Bill was junior corn champion of the State of Ohio. At the same show his father's corn exhibit took the reserve championship in the adult classes.

But back to our reports from the different sections. Farm and Home folks, may I present to you the State 4-H Club agent for South Carolina, Mrs. F. H. Johnson. Gracious, serene, and smiling, the brown-eyed embodiment of southern graciousness -- -- Mrs. Johnson, I wonder if you would repeat for our radio audience one of the comments that I have heard you make about the present situation among the young women in the rural sections of South Carolina.

JOHNSON:

I'll be glad to, Mr. Salisbury. But I think I should say before I repeat these comments that what I was talking about was the specialized problem of some of the girls who have been forced to leave school. These are the ones in the middle and late 'teens who are out of school, who haven't married and aren't thinking about marrying immediately, and who don't find industrial employment as so many girls like them used to do eight or nine years ago. Now these young people -- and the boys who are in the same fix you might say -- who can't get farms to operate as tenants or owners and who can't find industrial employment -- both these groups of young people find themselves in sort of a stranded social and economic situation. They have no income or very meager income to satisfy their normal human craving for being well dressed and getting

some recreation. We have recently been making some surveys in South Carolina to locate individuals of this type and see if we can't organize some extension projects to help them overcome their difficulties. Some of the home demonstration agents have organized marketing projects for the girls of this group and we believe in the future we can give them an opportunity to work together in such projects and earn some money.

SALISBURY:

But as you imply this is a special kind of problem for young folks. It isn't representative of the condition of the rank and file of farm boys and girls in the Southeastern States.

JOHNSON:

No, not entirely. Our farm families have had more to do with the last year or two so that there is more contentment and greater hope among them. However, they are not out of the woods and on easy street yet by any means. I notice that there still is a heavy demand for extension projects which will teach boys and girls and men and women too, to do repair work at home on machinery and furniture and so on and thus save cash expenditures; and also a great demand coming from all communities for training of leaders who can organize the people of the community to make their own recreation -- to conduct picnics and community meetings so that everyone present will take part in organized play; to organize groups to present dramatic productions; to organize amateur music groups and so on.

SALISBURY:

Well now, we have had some general idea given us of some of the elements in farm life in widely separated sections in this year of grace, 1935. What about the future? What do you Romaine, and you Bill look forward to in the future? How about it, Romaine? Bill has already given us some comments about what he would like to do.

TATE:

Why, so far as I am concerned -- and I guess the other girls in our community feel pretty much the same about it -- we are thinking mainly about fitting ourselves to do outstanding work in some line. We haven't had time to stop and think much about the general economic and social trends in the future.

SALISBURY:

You feel there is time enough for that later on?

TATE:

Yes, I suppose we do. I don't know just how to put it. Here is the general idea that seems to guide me -- if I make myself skillful at some line of work and ready to play my part in the world, I will have enough to do right now. When the time comes for me to play my part in the world, these questions of what to do or say or think about economic and social trends will come up. Then I will pitch into them and study them just as hard as I can and make up my mind on the basis of the facts that I can dig up.

LAYBOURNE:

That's a good way to express the general attitude of most of the young folks I know too.

McNEEL:

You want to get ready to take your own part and do a creditable job of it as an individual, and then you will take up the broader social and economic problems as your time comes to play the part of citizens in solving them.

LAYBOURNE:

That's it. Now is the training time. The time to make a capable individual out of yourself.

FERGUSON:

But Bill, I don't think you want to leave the impression that becoming capable individuals is the only thing in the minds of yourself and Romaine and other club members. As a matter of fact, in your club work you have learned quite a lot about working with other people; about submerging your own individual privileges for the greater good of the group; about working on behalf of others when you have got up ^{to} the late teens and have taken over leadership in junior clubs. You have already learned to work with other people. You are really training yourselves not only to be competent individuals but also to cooperate with other individuals.

TATE:

That's quite true, Mr. Ferguson. But I think that we need to know ever so many more things than people used to need to know when they started in farming and homemaking. We need to know things and be capable individuals before we can even begin thinking of cooperating to solve the big problems. Needing to know so much and having such a little time to lay the ground work for learning it, we just haven't puzzled our heads very much about those wider problems.

JOHNSON:

Yes, but you do like to talk about them, I notice. When speakers here at the club camp assembly periods have brought up these wider social and economic problems, I notice that a number of club members in the discussion sessions that follow have asked questions and made statements that indicate they have been thinking quite a bit about such things.

SALISBURY:

Well, I suppose that they will be the administrators and business leaders -- and maybe the brain trusters -- of 1955 or 1960. Sorry we haven't time to pursue this discussion further. From what you people have said though I think it is clear that if the young folks in the National 4-H Club Camp give an accurate sample of the farm young people in 1935, that twenty or twenty-five

years hence we shall have in charge of things in the agricultural sections a group of people with a high degree of technical training and knowledge and with a disposition -- if they carry on through into adult life the attitudes they show here -- a disposition to work together in solving common problems. I want to thank Romaine Tate and Bill Laybourne and Mrs. Johnson, and Messrs. Ferguson and McNeel, for coming here to the Farm and Home Hour microphone and giving us some comments on the present situation among farm young people and the prospects for the future. Now in closing I want to make an announcement which was issued Monday to the delegates at the National 4-H Club camp. The announcement concerns the 4-H Club boy and girl appointed to the National 4-H fellowship for 1935 and 1936. These fellowships are given by the Payne Fund, and they are worth \$1000 each. The ones receiving them will engage in study in the Department of Agriculture for nine months starting next fall. This is the fifth year the fellowships have been awarded. The winners are Ruth Lohmann of Zumbreta, Minnesota, and James W. Potts of Aspermont, Texas. Miss Lohmann and Mr. Potts were selected from 31 applicants, 13 girls and 18 boys representing 25 states.

Now we leave the affairs of the farm young folks for a moment to give the weather forecast for the next 24 to 36 hours.